

April 2000



HRM NewsLine

HRM Field Organizations Straightline

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As you may be aware, effective April 9, the reporting lines for regional human resource management organizations have changed from the Regional Administrators to the Assistant Administrator for Human Resource Management, AHR-1.

I was fortunate enough to participate in a workgroup which began looking at this new structure over a year ago. As the agency continues to implement personnel reform and face critical issues in the personnel area, there are compelling reasons for aligning the organization and the resources.

Both Ruth Leverenz and Glenda Tate (AHR-1) have stressed repeatedly that this change should be trans-

parent to our customers. In the Southwest Region, we have enjoyed an excellent relationship with our customers and have provided, I believe, responsive and high quality HR support. You should not expect that to change. Glenda has assured us that her objective is to provide even better service. There are no plans to reduce the resources supporting you. Hopefully, in the future we will be able to improve the way we do our work so that resources are concentrated where they will have the greatest impact.

I am excited about this new way of operating and look forward to continuing to work closely with all of you.

—Teri Bruner

★ CORE COMPENSATION

Conversion to Core Comp takes place on April 23 for some 6,500 non-bargaining unit employees. These employees will receive their personnel paperwork (SF50) through normal channels, and May 16 paychecks will reflect changes resulting from conversion. Need more info: www.faa.gov/CoreComp/ or email your questions to 9-AWA-Compensation.

IS YOUR FOCUS ON THE BUSINESS OF QUALITY OR THE QUALITY OF BUSINESS?

Mikel J. Harry, Ph.D. asked his audience: *Is your focus on the business of quality or on the quality of business?* According to Dr. Harry, organizations should focus on quality of their business using Six Sigma as a statistical approach to measure the quality of their services. Quality, as defined by Dr. Harry, is a *state in which the customer and the provider realize value entitlement in every aspect of the business relationship*. Six Sigma refers to a statistical measure of variation but there is much more to the process than simple statistics. The fundamental objective is customer satisfaction through continuous improvement in quality.

Six Sigma is the goal, which means products and processes will experience only 3.4 defects per million opportunities or 99.99966% good.

For a business process, the sigma value is a metric that indicates how well the organization is performing. The higher the sigma value, the better. It drives behavior by making an organization's values explicit in its compensation system and business strategy. Measurement is a key aspect of Six Sigma since the organization must measure what it values and understand that it can not improve what it does not measure.

Dr. Harry states that the basic "Nature of Business" is an exchange between the customer's need for services and the providers' capacity and capability of providing those services. The exchange of values is created when superior services are provided at the lowest cost, on time, and with little variation.

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NEW WORKERS' COMPENSATION INITIATIVE & PILOT PROGRAM FOR ELECTRONIC CLAIM SUBMISSION BEING TESTED.

On July 2, 1999, President Clinton signed the Federal Worker 2000 Presidential Initiative, which establishes timeliness of injury reporting. Over the next 5 years, agencies are expected to improve reporting time of injuries and illnesses by 5 percent a year. In addition, the initiative calls on agencies to reduce the occurrence of injuries by 3 percent a year and reduce the days employees spend away from work (lost production) by 2 percent from a baseline to be established under the current Fiscal year. OWCP will post quarterly results both for timely notice of work injury and lost production days.

Agencies are required to submit an employee's Notice of Injury (Form CA-1 or CA-2) within 10 working days (14 calendar days) of receiving it from an employee, if lost time from work or medical expenses are claimed or anticipated (20 CFR 10.110(a)). The CA-7 must be submitted no later than 5 working days (7 calendar days) after receipt from an employee. Facilities should submit these forms to HRMD immediately following an occurrence to ensure the agency is in compliance with the regulations. For the fourth quarter of FY 99, the data for DOT CA-1/CA-2 submissions indicate a 31.8 percent timely submission rate and for CA-7/CA-8 the rate of timely submission is 50.2 percent.

Southwest and Southern Region HRMD offices will be testing a pilot program for the electronic transmission of workers compensation claim forms. It is anticipated that turnaround time for receiving a claim number will be reduced from 10 days to 3 days once the system is on line.

NATIONAL GUARD SERVICE

Although National Guard service has never been considered military service except under certain conditions (individual called or drafted into actual service), it may be creditable for retirement purposes. To find out, you must contact the State Adjutant General's office in the state with which you served to verify if your service qualified under §233(d) of the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952 or under Title 10 of the US code. It is very important to verify previous National Guard Service before retirement. The Labor and Employee Relations Branch, ASW-16, is asking that employees with National Guard service contact Mary Metz (AT employees) at x5885 or Tammy Easterling (all others) at x5846 for verification. In some cases, service credit has been given without verification by a state's Adjutant General's office.

EAP OFFERS NEW SCREENING PROGRAMS

Effective April 1, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is offering employees and their family an opportunity to take an automated (self-administered) alcohol and/or depression assessment screening by calling toll

free 1-877-230-1839. One way you can tell if you have a drinking problem or if you are experiencing depression is through these types of screenings.

EAP gives employees a way to help themselves cope with problems affecting job performance and conduct. Professional EAP counselors can discuss these types of issues with you, help assess problems and provide short-term counseling or referral for additional professional services and resources within your community. Job effectiveness can be adversely affected when employees are faced with mental or emotional problems, family responsibilities, financial or legal difficulties, or dependent care needs. A call to 1-800-234-1327 is all it takes to reach assistance through EAP.

NEW SEPARATION QUESTIONNAIRE

A new separation questionnaire is one of the initiatives under the Model Work Environment and a goal in the FAA's strategic plan. Completion of the anonymous questionnaire is voluntary by all employees leaving the agency, including those retiring.

Developed in conjunction with the Office of Civil Rights and the Civil Aeromedical Institute (CAMI) (and coordinated with unions), the data collected from the questionnaire will help FAA target areas for change that can improve the overall quality of the work environment. CAMI will analyze the data and provide periodic reports to senior management. Each line of business will be responsible for providing separating employees with the questionnaire along with a prepaid business envelope addressed to CAMI. A copy of the questionnaire is available on the ASW-10 intranet web site.

FERS RESIGNATIONS

FERS employees who have reached the minimum retirement age (55-57) with at least 10 years' service can take a reduced annuity and keep their health and life insurance benefits if they had the coverage for 5 continuous years prior to retiring. In some cases, FERS employees have been unaware of their retirement eligibility and have resigned with a refund of less than 1 percent, and no benefits! A reduced annuity with health/life insurance coverage is a more valuable benefit. Before anyone resigns from the agency, they should seek benefits counseling. Contact Mary Metz (x5885) or Tammy Easterling (x5846) for more info.

TSP DELAYS COMPUTER CONVERSION UNTIL OCTOBER

In October, the TSP investment board will be implementing the new computer system that will provide participants with new options including two new investment funds choices and daily valuation of plan accounts. More details will be coming out.

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CEO's do not need parts per million but what they do need, is to know how to turn values into measurements. Six Sigma is a systemic process driven by the measurement of three critical values: process, operations, and business. Variation metrics drive process. Capacity metrics drive operations, and value metrics drive business.

Twelve key success factors needed to implement Six Sigma are:

- * A driving need to change.
- * Executive leadership with the ability to formulate new questions.
- * Breakthrough goals.
- * Defined resources.
- * A functional infrastructure.
- * Support systems.
- * Organizational will.
- * Black belt projects.
- * Capable people.
- * Compelling big ideas.
- * Deployment focus.
- * Operational freedom.

An organization can reach Six Sigma status in approximately 3 years. In the quality field, this is relatively quick considering (according to Dr. Harry) it took the Japanese 50 years to reach Six Sigma using TQM.

Although there is not space to list all 50 principles of Six Sigma, Dr. Harry did emphasize the following principles:

- ▶ Secure the insecure.
- ▶ Govern spontaneous intervention.
- ▶ Quest for entitlement.
- ▶ Not conforming to old standards.
- ▶ Newtonian commitment.
- ▶ Tactical power of statistical control.
- ▶ Designing dashboard ergonomics at the three levels of process, operations and business.

NOTE: From a presentation by Dr. Mikel J. Harry: "Six Sigma: The Breakthrough Management Strategy Revolutionizing the World's Top Corporations" 2/24/00/Dallas. We recognize that many LOB's and some contractors are planning or have already established a quality management system (QSM) based on ISO 9001:2000 or Six Sigma. This article is intended to give context to the Six Sigma method. (reprinted in part from ANI Link, March 2000). For more info on Six Sigma see *Quality Management Forum*, Summer & Fall 99 and *The Quality Progress Journal*, July 99. Mary Perkins, x5893, is the POC in HRM division for this topic.



Barry Williams, AHM-200, offers these words of wisdom regarding the image of HR projects. "What is image? It's a company's most valuable asset. The image in people's minds determines who they buy from, work for, invest in, and partner with." When we miss a deadline, provide an incomplete service, or deliver a substandard product, our image is at stake. The moral of this story is that we are perceived through our actions.

Image is everything!

UNDERSTANDING AND COPING WITH NEGATIVITY – PART 1

Negativity can spread through the workplace as quickly and do as much damage as a computer virus. A strong, positive attitude is your only defense. Monitor your actions and reactions in trying situations. *You* have to know whether *you* have a negative attitude before you can develop a positive one! And learn to deal effectively with negative co-workers. Don't let them impose their negative views on you. Self-understanding and coping skills are your greatest weapons against workplace negativity.

According to Lani Arrendondo, CareerTrack trainer, "A positive point of view is more than a feeling. You can feel bad and still be optimistic. Look for ways to stay optimistic. Work to stay or become emotionally healthy—feed yourself good thoughts and good self-images."

Acting vs. Reacting

You can deal with a negative situation by:

Reacting. If you witness a co-worker say or do something negative, do you become angry? Do you argue with them and exchange harsh words? Or, do you clandestinely seek revenge? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you react to negative situations and consequently make a negative situation worse. You cause negativity to escalate and spread. When you react, negativity escalates and will eventually damage your

working relationship with the other person—so, you don't want to react.

Acting. By doing this, you can halt negativity and move past it. When you act, you can change a negative situation into a positive one. Ask yourself, "what can I do to improve this situation?" Consciously choose to say and do what you think will prompt a positive response from your co-worker. Be more aware of the behavior that you can expect from negative thinkers and think about how you'll respond to that behavior.

Negative Communication

Watch how you communicate with your co-workers—non-verbal communication has a greater impact on your message than the words you say. You communicate verbally (think before you speak); vocally (tone has a major impact); and visually (body language). Think about how communication patterns such as tone, invasion of personal space, rude remarks, nasty looks, and dismissive gestures upset you. Try not to resort to these devices when communicating. If you do, you'll pass on a negative attitude.

(source: Federal Human Resources Week, 8/11/97)

FIXING A CORE COMP DISPARITY

Many employees in steps 1-3 under the current FG system are concerned about what will happen to their pay under Core Comp. The Core Plan Estimator projects that most employees in this situation will receive smaller annual pay increases than they would have under the FG system. It also projects that their cumulative pay over the 5-year projection period might be lower than under the current system. Here are the reasons why:

Under the current FG system, employees in steps 1-3 receive a within-grade increase (WIG) annually, in addition to the January general increase. This compares to employees in steps 4-6 who receive a WIG every 2 years, and those in steps 7-9 who receive a WIG every 3 years. Employees in step 10 do not receive WIGs. These timeframes result in significant pay differences, based solely on how long employees have been in a grade and step.

Under the Core Comp plan, WIGs based on longevity are eliminated and replaced with performance-based increases. This means all employees will have the same opportunities to earn pay increases based on their individual contributions and the overall success of the FAA, regardless of how long they have been in their position or level. These pay increases are the Organizational Success Increase (OSI) and the Superior Contribution Increase (SCI). They are based on performance, rather than on a rigid time-based formula.

While some might look at this as unfair to employees in lower steps, another way to look at it is that the FAA is eliminating an existing inequity that provided lower pay increases for employees in higher steps.

The Core Plan Estimator illustrates the potential impact of this change over the next 5 years. However, over a longer period of time, differences in pay between the Core plan and the

current system will eventually even out. A lot depends on what is factored into the equation. Employees can use the estimator to factor in one or more SCIs, for example, and the results are quite different. Unfortunately, the estimator can not project all possible scenarios. For example, employee promotions are not factored into the estimator. However, promotions to the next higher pay band would have quite an impact on future pay.

RETIREMENTS JANUARY MARCH 2000

Barnard, Deanna	Houston ARTCC
Bemis, James	ASW-50
Berry, Jimmy	ANI
Brown, Edward	DeRidder AFSS
Brownfield, James	ASW-200
Cordova, Armando	San Angelo AFSS
Darling, Norma	ABQ ARTCC
Day, Douglas	ASW-400
Harbison, Veda	DAL FSDO
Hellman, Catherine	McAlester AFSS
Johnson, Robert	Montgomery Cy AFSS
Maston, Lewis	Shreveport ATCT
McGraw, Frances	ASW-100
Mings, Donald	ABQ ARTCC
O'Quinn, Jimmie	Houston ARTCC
Porschett, Kathleen	Shreveport ATCT
Ramos, Barbara	Rio Grande SMO
Rindner, Arthur	ASW-200
Schneiders, Joseph	Houston Intcl.
Thompson, Teresa	FTW AFSS
West, Stephen	El Paso ATCT
Yates, Jerry	OKC FSDO
Zavala, Joel	ASW-400

Roundup


✧ The Manager's Core Comp training was completed in March. Employee "video" briefings are being conducted throughout the region for employees converting to core comp on April 23, 2000. Copies of the video have been distributed to Lines of Business through their core comp trainer/facilitators. Contact Mamie Harley, ASW-18, x5895 for additional videos.

✧ Need FAA HR policy and guidance? Check out the national HR web site at: interweb.faa.gov/ahr/index.cfm. You can also access the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) site for Federal personnel info: www.opm.gov.

✧ National Transportation Week: (May 14-20) marks the vital role transportation plays in assuring American economic prosperity and a high quality of life for its citizens. This year's program will focus on bringing transportation partners to work together toward a common purpose; educating the public about the transportation industry; and encouraging young people to pursue careers in transportation. Web: www.ntweek.org.

✧ The 2000 Federal Personnel Guide is available. Check the web for details: www.fedreport.com.

✧ The Census Bureau is looking for temporary workers. FAA employees may accept these positions as a second federal appointment. For info call 888-325-7733 or www.census.gov.



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